

Press Release

Contact: pr@welancoragallery.com

646-818-0612

Welancoragallery.com

Shake Loose My Skin

Opening reception: Thursday, April 18 from 6:00pm-8:00pm



Na'ye Perez, *Baptize Float* (2024)

Welancora Gallery is pleased to present *Shake Loose My Skin*, a solo presentation of new mixed media works, a short film and an installation by Na'ye Perez (b. 1992). Perez's works focus on community and landscape as it relates to memory. This exhibition will be on view from April 18 to June 6, 2024. The opening reception will take place on Thursday, April 18 from 6:00pm to 8:00pm.

How does one capture the essence of a community and what does it mean to document its lifecycle? Perez's eclectic mixed media compositions encapsulate the vibrancy, shared joys, histories and traumas of inner city youth culture. Creating scenes that are a blend of reality and imagination, Perez uses a wide range of materials to archive the small, fleeting moments of everyday life in various places. Fond albeit fading memories from Brooklyn, Los Angeles, and Columbus, Ohio are given new life through bold colors, as well as lush textures and patterns.

Perez sources his materials as he travels, picking up items along the way as representations of the places where he has lived and visited. *Baptize Float* depicts an actual street corner in his childhood neighborhood in Ohio; elements of the city of Columbus are shown through bus passes, state lottery tickets, and a real business lost to fire. Perez's materials across his works also make reference to African American and Caribbean culture through images of hip hop

legends, Black political figures, imported goods, elements of graffiti, maps of predominantly ethnic neighborhoods, and accessories popularized by Black populations.

Perez captures the memory of his peers audibly using two methods – an installation revealing pre-recorded messages via an answering machine, and performing traditional African American dance in a film. The installation – titled *When The Wind Blows, The Ocean Waves of Uncut Grass Crash Upon The Sidewalk, It Beckons Me Home* – acts as a physical embodiment of the existence of past moments, inviting the audience to reminisce with the artist through these digitally archived stories. Despite not knowing who the voices belong to, nor having seen their faces, their presence and emotion still echoes the importance of close relationships within one's community. The film, *PsalmSing*, depicts the artist performing in front of the location seen in *chase feeling/no new wave (Only The Sea)*. At the eastern tip of Montauk, Long Island, there exists a melancholy remnant of a basketball court partially submerged in the Atlantic Ocean; the backboard reads 'The End.' Tapping into his roots as a member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Incorporated, a Historically Black Greek Letter Organization, Perez uses step-dancing to celebrate the presence and energy of his ancestors. The film has a runtime of 44:44 minutes, in which the sun sets upon Perez as another nod to the flowing passage of time. Using his body to harken back to spiritual African American histories allows Perez to *shake loose his skin* – a reference to the powerful writings of the African American poet, Sonia Sanchez – to honor his community's culture and essence.

About the Artist

Na'ye Perez (b. 1992, Los Angeles) is a multidisciplinary artist based in Brooklyn, New York. He received his BFA in 2015 from the University of Toledo (2D Studies and Specialization) and his MFA in 2020 from the Pratt Institute of Art (Painting and Drawing). Through his paintings, drawings and socially engaged performances, his work explores themes of shared experiences, identity, and accessibility. He has shown work in solo and group exhibitions nationally at RegularNormal Gallery, NY; Community Folk Art Center at Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY; 129 Studio Gallery, Columbus, OH; Residency Gallery, LA, California; BRIC, Brooklyn, NY; Oolite Arts, Miami Beach, FL; Pratt Gallery, NY; and Dinner Gallery, NY. His residencies include New Wave, West Palm Beach, FL; The Shed's DISOBEY and Pratt Forward, both in NY. Perez's artworks are in the personal collections of Carrie Mae Weems, Derek Fordjour, and Yashua Klos. His work is also in the collection of the University of Toledo.